



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

September 2, 2009



Dear Students,

Welcome back to school for what I'm sure will be another exciting and challenging year of learning! It's a particularly significant time for me, too, as I am beginning my first school year in Rhode Island as Commissioner of Education. During my first weeks as Commissioner, I have had the pleasure of visiting many summer-learning programs and meeting parents, educators, and students. Everyone I have met so far has made me even more sure that we can work together to have great schools in every community in our state.

I am completely confident that you, our students, can achieve at high levels and be competitive against your peers around this nation and around the world. We depend on you to do your best work, and you can depend on me and other school leaders to do everything we can to make sure you have the best teachers in the world in your classrooms.

I have said many times that every decision I make as Commissioner will be based on what is in the best interest of students. To make good on this pledge, I am eager to get to know you and to learn about your needs, concerns, and aspirations. Over the next several weeks, I will visit every community in the state to get to know you, your teachers, and your parents. Your voice will always be a vital part of my work. You may contact me at any time at deborah.gist@ride.ri.gov, and I encourage you to follow me (Deborah A. Gist) on Twitter and on Facebook, where I will keep you up to date on my thoughts about education.

I wish you success in the coming school year!

Sincerely,

Deborah A. Gist
Commissioner

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